



# Tips for Using Dragon NaturallySpeaking Versions 6, 7 & 8

## Table of Contents

<b>Microphone Position and Settings .....</b>	<b>1</b>
Inspect and Position the Microphone .....	1
Say "Check Audio" .....	2
<b>The Correction Process .....</b>	<b>3</b>
Improve Accuracy Quickly .....	3
Let the PC Read to You .....	3
Hear Your Own Voice Speaking the Words .....	3
Turn on "Automatic Playback on correction" .....	4
Use the "Minus" and Arrow Keys to Play Back and Correct .....	4
Changing HotKeys .....	5
<b>Saving and Exporting User "Speech" Files .....</b>	<b>6</b>
Say "Save Speech Files" .....	6
Export a User Profile .....	7
<b>Getting Help .....</b>	<b>7</b>
"Give Me Help" .....	7
"What Can I Say" .....	7
<b>VocaLinks Inc. Coaching &amp; Customization .....</b>	<b>8</b>
How to Contact Us .....	8



# Tips for Using Dragon NaturallySpeaking Versions 6, 7 & 8

## Microphone Position and Settings

- ❖ Inconsistent or inappropriate microphone positioning is one of the most common causes of poor speech recognition accuracy. When a microphone is too far from the speaker's mouth the computer will have difficulty "hearing". If the microphone is too close to the speaker's mouth, it will pick up breath noises, which result in unwanted words being typed onto the page.

As well, the volume settings determined by the NaturallySpeaking software need to be updated from time to time to take into account changes in the amount of noise in a classroom, the position of the microphone relative to the speaker's mouth, and the loudness (or softness) of the speaker's voice.

It is important for students and teachers to become familiar with the use of the Audio Setup Wizard, and to use it regularly – ideally, at the start of every dictation session

### **INSPECT AND POSITION THE MICROPHONE**

- ❖ Before putting on your headset, take a close look at it.

#### **1. Is there a foam "windscreen" on the tip of the microphone?**

If you're using a silver-and-blue Plantronics headset, there will not be a windscreen (it's actually hidden inside the blue plastic "bulge"), but on most other models there should be an obvious piece of foam covering the microphone.

It is VERY important that this windscreen be in place in order for NaturallySpeaking to work effectively.

DO NOT attempt to dictate into NaturallySpeaking with a microphone that is missing its windscreen! Your sound quality will be terrible for speech recognition.

We recommend securing windscreens in place with electrical tape, as they frequently get lost.

Replacement headset microphones may be purchased from VocaLinks Inc. For more information, please contact Peter Butler at one of the phone numbers listed at the bottom of this page.

#### **2. Put the headset on, remembering to bring the microphone element close to your chin, just below your lower lip, if possible (microphone designs vary – some have very short microphone "booms" that don't reach your chin).**

Look for a small white or coloured dot (or the word "Talk") on the microphone near the windscreen. This mark should face your chin,

SAY "CHECK AUDIO"

rather than pointing directly at your mouth. Sometimes students twist the microphone boom so that the mark is facing away from them. This seriously degrades the sound quality.

1. **After NaturallySpeaking is running and your User Profile has loaded, turn on the microphone and say "Check Audio" to open the Audio Setup Wizard.**
2. **The *Adjust your volume* window appears. Click the *Start Volume Check* button and be prepared to start reading aloud the grey text as soon as it turns black. After 10-15 seconds you will hear a beep.**

It is important that you speak in a relaxed manner at a normal speaking volume and pace. This is not a race. It is as important for the computer to sense the natural pauses between words and phrases as it is to hear the words themselves.

3. **The *Checking Sound Quality* window appears. Click the *Start Quality Check* button and be prepared to start reading aloud the grey text as soon as it turns black.**

After 10-15 seconds you will hear another beep.

Once again, a relaxed, normal speaking pace and volume is expected here. At this stage the computer is actually learning to differentiate the ambient noises in the room from the sound of your voice.

4. **Take a look at the numeric *Speech-to-noise* score displayed in the black box onscreen.**

Scores of 16 and above are considered to be acceptable for speech recognition, but the highest accuracy is achieved with scores in the low-to-mid 20's (or higher). If you have scored in the teens, see if the following steps help you to obtain a higher score:

- a. If there is a Mute switch on your microphone cable, make sure the microphone is not muted.
  - b. Position the microphone a little closer to your mouth (but not so close that you're blowing directly into it when you exhale).
  - c. Reduce the amount of noise in the room around you.
  - d. Try a different model of microphone, if one is available.
  - e. NaturallySpeaking has a difficult time hearing "whispery" voices. Some users may need to make a conscious effort to talk a little louder (but shouting is counter-productive).
5. **To repeat the audio setup process, you'll need to click the *Back* button once, so that you return the *Adjust your***

**volume window. Then you can do the volume and quality tests again.**

6. Click the *Finish* button at the bottom of the window.

## The Correction Process

### IMPROVE ACCURACY QUICKLY

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- ❖ Many new users can achieve noticeable improvements in their accuracy fairly quickly if they adopt the following strategy:

1. Dictate a sentence.
2. Turn the microphone off when you've finished dictating. It's very common for people to forget to do this.
3. Use your mouse to select the paragraph.

We'll now test the two different ways that NaturallySpeaking can read your text back to you.

### LET THE PC READ TO YOU

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1. Click the light blue **Sound** menu, then select **Read That**.

NaturallySpeaking will use its synthetic voice to read the words in the selected paragraph.

Did you hear any unusual word combinations? This is one way that people can check their documents for recognition errors.

### HEAR YOUR OWN VOICE SPEAKING THE WORDS

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1. With the paragraph still selected, click the light blue **Sound** menu again, then select **Play That Back**.

NaturallySpeaking will now play back the recording of your voice speaking your original dictation.

- a. Did you notice whether any of the words on the screen didn't quite match what you were saying even though you said the right thing? You should use the correction tools to fix these recognition errors.
- b. Did you stumble over words or repeat yourself when you were dictating? You should select the problem words or phrases and re-dictate them.
- c. Did you make loud breath sounds while you were speaking which were turned into words by NaturallySpeaking? You should try moving the microphone a little lower relative to your mouth to avoid your breath stream, then turn on the microphone, say "Check Audio" and reset the volume and sound quality levels. You may also need to practice turning the microphone off after speaking each phrase, rather than leaving it turned on throughout your dictation session.

**TURN ON "AUTOMATIC  
PLAYBACK ON  
CORRECTION"**

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- ❖ This Options setting lets NaturallySpeaking play back your voice for each word or phrase that you correct using the Correction List feature.

2. Click the purple *Tools* menu.
3. Select *Options...* from the menu.
4. Click to place a checkmark in the checkbox next to *Automatic playback on correction*.
5. Click the *OK* button.

**USE THE "MINUS" AND  
ARROW KEYS TO PLAY  
BACK AND CORRECT**

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- ❖ Now we'll see if the Correction tools can help improve the accuracy of NaturallySpeaking.
1. Double-click on the first word in the paragraph to select it (even if the word has been typed correctly).

2. On the Numeric KeyPad on the right side of the keyboard, press the *minus-sign* key (-).\*

This will open the Correction List, and, when "Automatic playback on correction" is turned on, it should also prompt NaturallySpeaking to play back the sound of your voice speaking that word.

\*Laptop PC users: Refer to the "Changing HotKeys" topic to pick an available key to use instead of the minus sign.

3. Press the right arrow key on the keyboard.

This will select the next phrase in the document. Keep pressing the right arrow until you hear a passage that doesn't match the typed text. You now have three main courses of action:

- a. If you see the right choice of words in the Correction List, select it. One way to do this is to press the down arrow on the keyboard until you've selected the right choice. Then press the right arrow to accept the choice and move forward to the next phrase.
- b. If you hear that you stumbled, or mispronounced a word or phrase, you can turn on the microphone and speak that phrase again. The selected words in your document will be replaced by what you dictate.
- c. If you hear the correct words being spoken, but don't see them typed correctly in the document or in the Correction List, press the down arrow until *Spell That* is selected in the list, then press the *Enter* key to open the *Spell* window. The *Spell* window gives you a longer list of suggestions, as well as

*use arrow key \**

an editing area at the top of the window where you can type a correction. You can also click the *Play Back* button to hear your original dictation.

In order for NaturallySpeaking to learn not to repeat this mistake, it is important that the words typed in the editing area **exactly** match the words you hear when you click the *Play Back* button. Once you've made the correction, click the *OK* button to close the *Spell* window.

You'll need to select the next word or phrase in the document, then press the minus key to display the Correction List again, so that you can continue to use the right arrow to advance through the document.

**4. Once you've made any necessary corrections, turn on your microphone, say "New Paragraph", and then dictate the same passage.**

NaturallySpeaking should make fewer mistakes as a result of your corrections, but it will rarely be absolutely perfect.

**5. Save your speech files.**

**6. Repeat these steps until your document is complete.**

- ❖ There are several advantages to this strategy:
  - As you make corrections, the accuracy of your subsequent dictation within the same document will improve, especially if you've introduced new names and terminology into the vocabulary.
  - The actual speed at which NaturallySpeaking types your dictated text increases as it gains greater certainty about your word usage and pronunciation patterns through your use of the correction tools.
  - If your computer unexpectedly freezes, your User Profile will already have been updated to the point at which you last saved your speech files. You won't lose all the benefit of your correction efforts.

- ❖ If you don't make a conscious effort to save your speech files, you'll still have the opportunity to do so when you choose "Exit" from the NaturallySpeaking menu in the DragonBar. NaturallySpeaking will display a message asking whether you wish to save your user files.

If you have done a thorough job of proofreading and correcting your document you should click the "Yes" button.

## **CHANGING HOTKEYS**

- ❖ Laptop PCs do not have the same keyboard layout as the keyboards that are typically provided with desktop PCs. As a result, laptop users often find it convenient to reassign some of the NaturallySpeaking keyboard shortcuts to Function keys on their keyboards.

The two most useful keys to re-assign are the **Microphone HotKey** (by default, the “plus sign” on the numeric keypad) and the **Correction HotKey** (by default, the “minus sign” on the numeric keypad). Here’s how to make these changes:

1. Click the purple **Tools** menu.
2. Select **Options...** from the menu.
3. Click the **Hot keys** tab.
4. Click the **Microphone on/off...** button onscreen.
5. Press the function key that you would like to use to control your microphone. We suggest the **F8** key.
6. Click the **OK** button to accept {F8} as the HotKey.
7. Click the **Correction...** button onscreen.
8. Press the function key that you would like to use to open the **Correction List**. We suggest the **F9** or **F10** key.
9. Click the **OK** button to accept your chosen key as the HotKey.
10. Click the **OK** button to close the **Options** window.

## Saving and Exporting User “Speech” Files

- ❖ As you use the NaturallySpeaking Correction Tools to proofread and correct recognition errors, the software collects information that will help reduce the probability of the same error occurring in the future. This information is held temporarily in your computer’s RAM while you work.

It’s a good idea to get into the habit of saving this information from time-to-time as you complete the process of correcting your dictated text.

### **SAY “SAVE SPEECH FILES”**

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- ❖ All you need to do is:

1. Say “Save Speech Files”

*Or, to do this by mouse:*

2. From the **NaturallySpeaking** menu in the DragonBar, select **Save User Files**

You’ll see the DragonBar turn grey for a few seconds as your User Profile is updated. Once the DragonBar appears in colour again, you’re ready to continue dictation.

## **EXPORT A USER PROFILE**

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- ❖ On some networked PC's, special security software (such as DeepFreeze) automatically erases any changes made to the built-in hard disk every time the computer is shutdown (or crashes) and is restarted. On these computers, the NaturallySpeaking user files will simply vanish each time the computer is turned on, and users will need to retrain a user file every time they use NaturallySpeaking.

This obviously limits the usefulness of the speech recognition software. Fortunately, the NaturallySpeaking Preferred and Professional editions allow users to export their User Profiles to other folders on the network, or to large capacity storage devices such as USB Flash Memory keys or CD-ROM "burning" programs.

Since User Profiles are continually adapting to an individual's word usage, and are learning from corrections made during each dictation session, it is useful to export a User Profile after each dictation session.

3. **Left-click the green *NaturallySpeaking* menu in the DragonBar.**
4. **Select *Manage Users* from the menu.**
5. **Left-click the user profile you wish to export.**
6. **Click the *Advanced* button (in v.7 & 8 only).**
7. **Select *Export...* from the pop-up menu.**

You will now need to use the Browse window that appears to select a folder in which to save the exported User Profile. If you are planning to "burn" a CD, you will usually need to save the profile to a folder on the local "C:" drive, then use a CD-writing program to "burn" that folder onto a blank CD.

## **Getting Help**

### **"GIVE ME HELP"**

*USER'S GUIDE PAGE 31*

- ❖ The Help menu in the DragonBar allows you to access information that can help you improve your overall accuracy in Dragon NaturallySpeaking. It also gives you access to a comprehensive database of Help Topics that describe the many features of Dragon NaturallySpeaking in detail.

### **"WHAT CAN I SAY"**

*USER'S GUIDE PAGE 32*

- ❖ When you say "What can I say" the Sample Commands window will open on the right side of your screen. In this window you will see a list of the most commonly used commands that you can speak to control the program in which you are currently working.



## **VocaLinks Inc. Coaching & Customization**

- ❖ At VocaLinks Inc. we are committed to helping people accomplish more through the use of technology. Many aspects of document production can be streamlined or automated using tools such as Speech Recognition, Macros, Scripts and Templates.
- ❖ To learn more about these topics, and to learn more about how to apply the available technologies to your tasks, please contact us at:

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### **HOW TO CONTACT US**